State-wise estimates of production of major rabi crops for 1996-97 and 1997-98 are annexed.-(See Appendix 184, Annexure No 27].

(c) The prospects of rabi crops during 1997-98 was closely monitored in the Crop Weather Watch Group meetings in the Ministry of Agriculture. Besides, vari-ous meetings were also organised with different State Governments to overcome the problems being faced due to prevailing situation during rabi 1997-98 season. Arrangements were made for supply of quality seeds, of short duration varieties, fertilisers, pesticides, credit etc. Extension machinery was geared up. The senior officers in the Ministry were allotted States for close monitoring of the situation with a view to take remedial measures. As a result, the situation improved and the loss in production curtailed.

Degradation of Agricultural land in Orissa

906. SHRI BHAGABAN MAJHI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the growing degradation of agricultural land in Orissa;

(b) if so, what are the main reasons for the growing degradation of agricultural land; and

(c) the steps taken to check the degra-dation of land?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAll): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The main reasons for the growing degradation of agricultural lands are un scientific exploitation of the land resour ces, over-grazing, shifting cultivation, de forestation and haphazard mining etc.

(c) Department of Agriculture is imple menting two Centrally Sponsored Schemes such as (i) Soil Conservation in the catchments of River Valley Projects, (ii) National Watershed Development Project in Rainfed Areas, to arrest degra-dation of agricultural lands in the State. In addition to this, the Government of Orissa also implement several programmes, namely, (i) Integrated Watershed Development Project (ii) Indo-Danish Comprehensive Watershed Development Project (iii) Plantation of miscellaneous and commercial species in wastelands. Besides the above, the State Department also takes up various Soil Conservation measures like Drainage Line Treatment, Check Dams, Stabilisation of shifting sand dunes, avenue plantation, etc., to certain Soil erosion.

Production of Cereals and Pulses in Orissa

907. SHRI BHAGABAN MAJHI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the total production of cereals and pulses in Orissa during 1995-96, 1996-97 and 1997-98;

(b) the target set for the production of cereals and pulses in the State for the same period; and

(c) the various steps taken to increase the area under cultivation of cereals and pulses in Orissa in Ninth Five Year Plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) and (b) The targets and achievements in production of cereals and pulses in Orissa during 1995-96 to 1997-98, is as follows:—

(in lakh tonnes)

Crops	Year	Targets	Achieve-ments
Cereals	1995-96	72.89	63.71
	1996-97	72.60	45.36
	1997-98	69.30	64.87
Pulses	1995-96	11.30	4.31
	1996-97	11.30	2.99
	1997-98	7.00	3.84

(c) To increase the production and productivity of cereals and pulses, the